Recommendation 10: Forestry should ensure that performance data is centrally located and that it is readily available and easily accessible to management.

Summary of Management's Response: LDAF agrees with this recommendation.

Recommendation 11: Forestry should use performance data to develop formal staffing plans for the districts to ensure that current personnel are allocated in the most effective manner.

Summary of Management's Response: LDAF partially agrees with this recommendation. However, because of Forestry's wildland firefighting responsibilities and legislative mandates, certain staffing levels must be maintained in each district regardless of performance data. The performance data will allow Forestry to determine the possibility of assigning certain districts more diverse duties to compensate for lower performance indicators in certain categories.

Recommendation 12: Forestry should use performance data to conduct needs assessments and ensure that the office has the necessary equipment and personnel to accomplish its mission.

Summary of Management's Response: LDAF partially agrees with this recommendation. However, as stated in LDAF's response to the previous recommendation, Forestry must maintain a certain level of equipment and personnel within each district to meet its wildland firefighting responsibilities. Performance data can be used to analyze non-fire related activities conducted by the districts.

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│   Annual Management and Program Analysis Report               │
│                  Fiscal Year 2007 -2008                       │
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Department: Agriculture and Forestry, Office of Forestry

Department Head: Name: Mike Strain
                            Title: Commissioner

Undersecretary (or Equivalent):   Name: Craig Gannuch
                                                 Title: Assistant Commissioner

I.   **What outstanding accomplishments did your department achieve during the previous fiscal year?**

        For each accomplishment, please discuss and explain:

        A. What was achieved?
                1- Average wildfire size less than 9 acres.
                2- More than 95 percent of forest tree seedling demand met
                3- More than 25,000 acres planted in trees.
                4- More than 15,000 acres of forestland prescribed burned.
                5- More than 1,800 forest management plans written.
        B. Why is this success significant?
                1- Losses from wildfire effectively contained despite limited resources.
                2- Forest sustainability depends on continued supply of quality seedlings.
                3- Indicates effective efforts in forest sustainability.
                4- Very effective contributor to forest health, regeneration and reduced accumulation of hazardous fuels.
                5- Represents direct assistance to Louisiana forest landowners and an impact on the proper management of their forest resources.
        C. Who benefits and how?
                1- Louisiana landowners, citizens, forest industry, through reduced losses of resources and lower risk to life and property.
                2- Louisiana landowners, forest industry through sustained cost-effective forest productivity.
                3- Louisiana landowners, forest industry through sustained cost-effective forest productivity.
                4- Louisiana landowners, citizens, forest industry, through increased

productivity and reduced risk.

     5- Louisiana landowners, forest industry through sustained cost-effective forest productivity.

D. How was the accomplishment achieved?

     1- Careful utilization of resources, along with beneficial weather conditions.

     2- Efficient management of state nursery operations.

     3- Efficient state and federal cost-share program, landowner outreach and education.

     4- Commitment of limited resources to delivery of this program.

     5- Written documentation of the assistance provided to forest landowners.

E. Does this accomplishment contribute to the success of your strategic plan? (See Section II below.)

     1- Yes

     2- Yes

     3- Yes

     4- Yes

     5- Yes

F. Does this accomplishment or its methodology represent a Best Management Practice that should be shared with other executive branch departments or agencies?

     1- No

     2- No

     3- No

     4- No

     5- No

II. Is your department five-year strategic plan on time and on target for accomplishment?

To answer this question, you must determine whether your anticipated outcomes—goals and objectives—are being attained as expected and whether your strategies are working as expected and proceeding on schedule.

Yes.

- **Please provide a brief analysis of the overall status of your strategic progress.** What is your general assessment of overall timeliness and progress toward accomplishment of results targeted in your goals and objectives? What is your general assessment of the effectiveness of your strategies? Are anticipated returns on investment are being realized?

These accomplishments represent the core program areas of the Office of Forestry. Protection of forest resources and the state from wildfire and increased forest productivity are the primary reasons for the existence of the Office of Forestry. Although continued budget restrictions and related personnel limitations prevent us from effectively adopting additional programs, we have managed to meet these demands for the past year. Continued success at this level is doubtful without additional revenue.

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

SEPTEMBER 1, 2009

SUBMITTED BY:
MIKE STRAIN, DVM
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

LDAF Program: **Management and Finance**
Staff Contact: **Craig Gannuch**
Date: **August 20, 2009**

Section One: Agency Overview

Identify your overarching reform goal(s) for the agency. As many of you experienced during the legislative session, it is paramount that you always strive to make our policy and programmatic goals clear and understandable to those outside your agency.   This could also include a brief general narrative description of what the agency does if it is not obvious from the goals.

Review and briefly outline the constitutional and statutory mandates for your agency. Determine what is required of your agency by law as distinct from the actual activities of your department.

> **List those mandates which impede attaining agency goal(s) and suggestions for changes in law(s).**

Section Two: Efficiency and Benchmarking

Identify under-performing programs that should be overhauled or eliminated. The Commission will call on you to justify your programming based on performance and whether or not you are meeting the needs of Louisiana's citizens.

Fleet.   During the past year, the department has consolidated its fleet maintenance activities to reduce the number of in-house auto repair shops from five locations down to the three. The department had previously operated repair shops at Baton Rouge, Hammond, Haughton, Monroe and Woodworth. A realignment of these services provided for the elimination of both the Baton Rouge and Haughton facilities.

As a statewide regulatory agency, the department provides mandated inspections and enforcement functions that include the annual inspection of weighing devices, gas pumps, fuel testing, grain elevators, pesticide applicators, other inspections related to consumer protection, and the enforcement of both livestock brand and timber laws. These highly-specialized regulatory functions require the maintenance of a large fleet of vehicles to carry out these public health and safety services. In addition to the consolidation of auto repair services, the department has also reduced the size of its regulatory fleet by approximately twenty-percent.

Funding for the replacement of the agency fleet has been requested, but unfunded over the last several years. While an aging fleet increases maintenance costs, the department continues to look for innovative ways to effectively carry out its mandated functions. As the fleet becomes obsolete, an appropriation will have to be considered to turn over those units that have exceeded their useful life in order to protect both the public and employees carrying out department

services. It is estimated that it would cost roughly $2.4 million annually to replace obsolete and unsafe vehicles operated by the department.

Purchasing. The internal process for approving purchasing requests was restructured for greater internal fiscal control of the purchases made by the department. Prior to the change, accounting personnel were notified after-the-fact when purchases were approved. This prohibited accountants from advising management on the availability of funds or budget authority or programmatic issues involving any request. The new system added a fiscal component that provides for review by the appropriate accountant and the agency's fiscal officer prior to final approval by the assistant commissioner for management and finance. This new system both enhances accountability for purchasing by management and allows the agency to better control expenditures.

Section Three: Outsourcing and privatization
List programs, functions, or activities that can be privatized or outsourced. This is a specific focus of the Commission. Consider this idea throughout your analysis, and offer a list of possible activities at the end of your report.

Section Four: Information Technology Integration
List IT projects already underway designed to improve efficiency and effectives as well as potential projects. This could include adoption of single technology platforms to increase purchasing power, reduce maintenance costs and provide better service. If you are aware of how the LaGov ERP project will improve your agencies operations or have suggestions to that end, provide them here.

Funding for acquisitions for IT projects for the department was eliminated in Fiscal Year 2010 during the executive budget process. The department has successfully implemented significant information technology initiatives in recent years to improve the efficiency of operations and the effectiveness of the services provided by the department.

Those projects may be categorized in four main areas: (1) application redesigns to a modular template platform for specific services with both centralized and program specific benefits; (2) cost savings application redesign; (3) cost savings technology; and (4) general cost savings initiatives relative to technology hardware, internet, and telecommunications. All of these initiatives span are either on-going or planned. Both projects completed or in the planning stage are outlined as follows:

1. **Application redesign to a modular template platform**
   a. **Seed Laboratory Information Management System Expansion (Project Completed)**
      This software tracks seed sampling, testing, reporting and billing. Enhancements were made to coordinate more modern business rules between the Revenue section and the Seed Lab on invoice creation, reporting, and reconciliation of revenue. This provides a means to generate invoices on a monthly reporting cycle instead of quarterly. Savings are realized by the reduction of QuickBooks licenses, fewer supplies are used to generate statements, invoices, and thus revenue is more

accurately and easily analyzed. Efficiencies realized are reduced double data entry, research time, and the invoice process is faster.

b. **Federal Grain Inspection System (Project Completed)**

This system tracks the sampling, testing and reporting of grains to the USDA. Modifications were made to this system to meet new federal standards and regulations. These changes involved the enhancement of the relational data structures and the creation of code to better manage and manipulate data required to interface with the federal warehouse. These enhancements resulted in a more efficient data collection system reducing inspection man hours and enabling inspectors to utilize the data for accurate reporting and billing requirements.

c. **Federal Grain Inspection System Billing (Project Planned)**

This is a planned enhancement to the Federal Grain Inspection System described in 1.b. above. In the future, new modules, stored procedures and views will be constructed to interface LDAF revenue system with our required data collection system to automate our billing procedures and provide us with additional cost analysis capabilities. This will reduce total labor and increase our efficiency in fulfilling federal billing requirements and revenue collections.

2. **Cost Savings Application Redesign**

a. **Web-based Timesheet Program Expansion (Project Complete)**

This web-based application enables electronic collection of daily time, task descriptions, and accurate reporting to the SAP payroll system for LDAF employees, greatly reducing the need for paper timesheets. The additional enhancements of this application permitted utilization to additional employees in a multi tier web based environment and provided us with enhanced scalability enabling us to provide greater quality assurance and analysis tools, increasing our efficiency, producing conformity and communication throughout the agency. The system has almost eliminated the transportation (physically driven, mailed or faxed long distance) of traditional paper timesheets and leave slips across the state from employee to supervisor then to the timekeeper for SAP input. Currently the system has over 600 users, holds over 228,000 timesheets, 244,000 leave requests and has processed over 2.1 million record transactions.

b. **Department Purchasing Request Workflow Expansion (Project Completed)**

This software automates the purchasing process statewide from entry of request through a multi-level approval system, ending with final approval by the Purchasing Authority in accordance with fiscal policy. The redesign of this software expedited the purchasing process by replacing the antiquated email approval system with a web-based system allowing instant access to any purchase request at any level of approval by the numerous participants in the requesting and approval process. A process for accounting for the department fleet and associated parts was added to more accurately track numerous auto parts and inventory. New, multiple levels of approval were incorporated to ensure fiscal policy was more accurately followed and fiscal constraints were strictly enforced. Savings are realized by denying unnecessary and frivolous requests. Time is saved by processing valid requests in a timely manner.

c. **LA Agriculture Finance Authority Purchasing Request Workflow (Project Completed)**

The software created a workflow to electronically track the maintenance of LAFA owned facilities, equipment, and utilities and the proper expenditure of these costs. It expedites the purchasing process by replacing the email approval system with a web-

based system allowing instant access to any purchase request at any level of approval by the numerous participants in the requesting/approval process. New, multiple levels of approval were incorporated to ensure LAFA fiscal policy was more accurately followed and fiscal constraints were strictly enforced. Savings are realized by denying unnecessary and frivolous requests. Time is saved by processing valid requests in a timely manner.

d. **Paper Document Imaging Web Workflow Expansion (Project in Progress)**
Utilizing the distributed multifunction devices ITS expanded the efficiency of a custom paper document imaging into a imaging workflow over multiple custom applications. Users barcode and image paper documents to specific folders on the network whereby an automated process reads the barcodes, renames the document, and indexes the file *via* PDF417 for a 1 step verification process. After verifying the documents, they are automatically imported into a corresponding application, thereby eliminating manual filing and enabling electronic research amounting to a significant cost savings over paper documents. 18 applications systems hold over 522,000 files containing over 926,000 images.

e. **Centralized Faxing and Open-source Print to PDF (Project Complete)**
All offices have access to centralized faxing and open-source print to PDF. Users don't have to print documents to then scan them in order to fax. They may fax directly from the desktop saving paper, ink, and equipment use for printing. Additionally, users may use the open-source print to PDF thereby making a read only document that the user may email. Both projects reduce the cost of sharing documents considerably; additionally we don't continually pay licensing for making PDFs.

f. **Horticulture Exams, Permits and Licensing (Project in Progress)**
This application tracks licensing, permitting and certificates that are entered, stored and printed by headquarters personnel. Inspections are carried out by inspectors on paper forms, mailed to headquarters and processed and filed there. Modifications were made to incorporate all relevant data into LDAF Warehouse to prevent duplication thereby saving duplicate entries and labor. This also prevents duplicate mailing to registrants with multiple license types in order to save mailing costs. The automation of notifications and results accumulated by these modifications increased our efficiency in billing and licensing of thousands of citizens interested in acquiring the appropriate credentials to pursue a career in horticulture in our state and neighboring states.

g. **Registration and Tonnage System for Fertilizer, Feed, Pet Food and Lime (Project Completed)**
This application regulates the manufacturing and sales of animal feeds, plant food, and agricultural liming materials. Regulation includes registration, labeling and tonnage fees and inspection and sampling. The implementation of major new rules and regulations caused the modification of this application producing increased efficiency and conformity across the four registration and tonnage modes. This also prevented duplication thereby saving duplicate entries and man hours. The automation of notifications increased our efficiency in billing, collections and registrations with reduced postage and printing costs.

h. **Structural and Non-Structural Pesticide Permits and Licensing Re-design (Project Complete)**

This application tracks the permitting, testing, licensing and certifications for businesses, licensees, consultants and technicians as required by Louisiana laws and regulations. The software also stores electronic documents and interfaces with our revenue department to display fees. Enhancements were made to incorporate new business rules and utilize the LDAF data warehouse. Various electronic documents were also added. Efficiencies gained include faster electronic research and faster processing of electronic documents. Use of the data warehouse minimizes duplication of data resulting in reduced man hours to find and eliminate duplicates, a major problem in the past. It also reduces server space required, thereby reducing hardware costs. Savings are also realized because we don't mail out duplicate documents to registrants. Billing and collection is faster and more efficient, resulting in increased revenue.

i. **Forestry Fire/Weather Web Application Expansion (Project Completed)**
This web application tracks pertinent fire and weather data daily across the state and produces cumulative statistical data to allow forestry personnel to analyze, collect and disseminate fire/weather reports real time. In addition, it allows Forestry managers to ensure all policies are followed and to complete public requests for data in a timely manner. Added quarterly and annual statistical reports to the LDAF website used by LDAF personnel and the general public. We also, added a fire occurrence map to the LDAF website showing frequency and intensity of annual fire activity. Used by the public and for reporting to federal agencies. The compilation of statistical electronic data prevents time-consuming manual data collection and interpretation, reducing man hours. A new export process expedites dissemination of important fire data to external agencies, also reducing man hours and gaining efficiencies. These additions to our website have resulted in fewer phone calls and inquiries. Statistical and analytical data provides LDAF with the ability to focus resources in appropriate areas, increasing our efficiency in managing resources and reducing costs.

j. **Central Supply Employee ID Card Inventory Tracking (Project Completed)**
This web and desktop application, along with a localized ID card system, ensures that all supply sides of managing supply inventory are covered. This electronic system tracks issues, invoicing, district requests and provides accurate reporting, allowing property manager to ensure department goals for inventory control are met. This program enhancement provided financial tracking of cost of Employee ID cards issued, stolen and lost. Also, we incorporated barcode scanning of Employee ID when employee obtains supplies. Electronic tracking to appropriate cost centers results in reduction of loss in inventory and provides more accurate inventory reconciliation, saving LDAF money. Efficiencies are gained because time-consuming adjustments to inventory and cost centers due to manual errors are no longer necessary. Other benefits are easy quarterly cost center reporting and analysis takes only and hour instead of a week.

k. **Farmer's Market Coupon Validation, Reconciliation, and Printing (Project Completed)**
This software tracks the distribution of farmer's market coupons to eligible seniors from mail out to bank reconciliation. It was enhanced to streamline the printing process between a remote location and the print shop located at the main office, thereby saving time and travel cost. This results in faster distribution of the coupons. In addition, it provides Program Managers the ability to validate coupons with bank

statements in a more efficient and timely manner due to new consolidated summary reports, allowing staff to process more coupons in a day. A reduction in training time for software use has resulted from the streamlining and simplification of the process.

l. **Farm Bill Reporting Payroll Data Collection and Reporting (Project Completed)**

This program tracks the collection of payroll data in accordance with the Farm Bill agreement between the USDA and LDAF. It was enhanced by consolidating business rules to grant statewide access to multiple users through a secure web-based platform for data collection and reporting. This enhancement provided more flexibility to accommodate multiple users per district and accurate tracking of previous employees. Productivity has increased due ease of access by multiple data entry personnel and expanded functionality.

m. **Food Distribution 'Food for Schools' Rewrite (Project Planned)**

This application tracks the receipt, storage and distribution of USDA donated food commodities in Louisiana. Currently, inventory, amounts distributed and available balances are maintained in a Borland Paradox system. Also, the new system will be easier to maintain in remote offices than the version of Paradox we are using that is no longer being supported. Problems continue to occur such as invalid data calculations and space limitation. Without adequate support, existing problems are difficult to resolve and further enhancement to meet ever changing needs is impossible. Most hardware being used is beyond the normal life cycle and can't be upgraded until this application is rewritten.

n. **Price Verification (Scanners) Rewrite (Project Planned)**

This consumer protection application records the accuracy of retail scanning devices to ensure the scanned price matches the advertised or shelf price. A pass or fail rate is given after each yearly inspection. If a store repeatedly fails inspections, enforcement actions are taken on the retailer. The antiquated system is failing at providing accurate historical records. The database fields are now elementary to the process needs for tracking and inspecting the licenses and permits. Hard files have to be kept in addition to the database. Research can only be done in the Baton Rouge headquarters office. Frequently the database files become corrupt due to power outages, computer malfunctions, and not performing a signoff procedure. Databases must be restored frequently. Old databases have a high demand on IT staff time and effort to maintain and cannot be uploaded into current database structures.

o. **Web Payment Portal (Project in Progress)**

Many of the department's customers have asked to be able to pay fees online. The online payment portal will more convenient for the registrant but also save on department labor and postage for each transaction. Postage, paper and printing costs will be reduced when the new system goes into operation. Currently, application and renewal forms are printed and mailed. File storage costs will also be reduced by the use of electronic records. Revenue check processing staffing needs will be reduced. Electronic research and reporting will be immediately available and thus save labor on traditional depositing of checks and cash.

3. **Cost Savings Technology**
   a. **Field Office Connectivity Redesign**
      i. **Point to Point connections to DSL and Cable Internet connections (Project Completed)**

Project involved eliminating all high cost point-to-point telecommunication data lines and subscribing to DSL or Cable Internet connections. The new connections realized a savings of up to 90% and increased efficiency of the interconnection by 200 to 500%. Security of the Internet Connections is in place *via* VPN and encryption (see section 3, a, iii).

ii. **Prevented the increase of telephone lines by adding small office phone switches (Project Completed)**

ITS have installed more small office phone switches in small satellite offices instead of increasing the number of monthly billed telephone lines. Project prevented 20 additional telephone lines from being ordered. Savings realized by keeping monthly residual cost down to a minimum while still providing shared telephone services.

iii. **Applied low cost custom interoffice Virtual Private Network Security (Project in Progress)**

LDAF utilizes 30 ultra low cost routers and applies custom system software which provides interoffice connectivity via the Internet at district offices. The system software consists of free open-source customized software. The system provides network administrators with tools to analyze, and troubleshoot interoffice connectivity issues easier and quicker than with most expensive proprietary products. Typical cost of this custom system is about 10% of proprietary products and no annual service or support contracts.

b. **Virtualization of Physical Servers (Project in Progress)**

This is the process of replacing one physical server or computer with a larger one that can act as though it is multiple physical servers using special virtualization operating system. The virtualization project has converted 23 physical servers consolidating down to 5 physical servers which translated to a reduction of maintenance, administration, licensing, and energy costs, while increasing resource utilization, scalability, and data availability. Resource utilization has increased from 5-10% on the 23 physical servers to 60-80% on the 5 servers running virtualization. Dynamic resource allocation enables new services to be brought online quickly, while reducing downtime for existing services, and allowing quick response to ever-changing operational requirements. As older resources continue to degrade, more services, and servers are moved to virtualized environment.

c. **Life Cycle Extensions; Server and Workstation Operating Systems & Hardware, Microsoft Office 2003 Suite and migration of Exchange 2000 to Exchange 2007 (Project Ongoing)**

In order maximize current hardware and software investments; ITS has almost doubled the normal life cycle of physical servers, desktop workstations, laptop workstations, network equipment, and printers which is normally 3-5 years to 7-9 years. Most server operating systems and service software have skipped at least one entire release version before being replaced or upgraded. For example, our email server was on Windows 2000 with Exchange 2000, and was upgraded to Windows 2008 with Exchange 2007 SP1, so the upgrade to Windows 2003 and Exchange 2003 was skipped reducing hardware and licensing costs. Additionally, due to cost, the department continues to use Microsoft Office 2003 as the standard office suite and not upgraded to Office 2007 as a cost saving measure. However, the department remains interoperable with the Office 2007 suite files by implementing file converters at no cost.

d. **Workgroup Printing Expansion (Project Ongoing)**

   Increased cost saving has resulted from the reduction of the local, personal printers, which are printers that are directly connected to desktop workstations. Locally connected printers are hidden from remote management utilities that are used to configure, control, and monitor the status of networked printers. They substantially increase the amount of time it takes to resolve printing issues because locally connected printers require assistance from the user in order to troubleshoot and resolve printing issues. Efficiency is improved additionally from printer management. Since network printers are able to be monitored remotely, they require very little or no user assistance when troubleshooting printing issues. The department has reconfigure workstations to print to a nearby workgroup printer. Additional locations statewide are moving to the use of a workgroup printer as the life cycle ends for personal printers or as ink stock is depleted and no funds are available for supplies. Cost savings can be realized through the purchase of supplies for fewer printers, less end user assistance, and less time spent resolving printer issues. And, increased efficiency is gained by less user intervention.

e. **Multifunction Print/Scan/Email/Fax devices, Fax machine reduction (Project Ongoing)**

   The HP LaserJet M4345 multifunction printer is currently replacing the older HP LaserJet printers. Cost savings realized through consolidation of print, scan, send-to-e-mail, and analog fax/RightFax functionality. Conserve paper resources with automatic two-sided printing, copying, and scanning. Increased efficiency due to the LaserJet M4345's simple, consistent user interface, and having the same devices at all locations. Every multifunction printer will have very similar configuration settings, which makes configuring new units extremely easy. The HP LaserJet M4345 prints 180% faster than the HP LaserJet 4100.

4. **General Cost Savings**

   a. **Reducing the number of Service Contracts on Software and Hardware (Project Ongoing)**

      ITS had not renewed a great portion of service contracts or software support agreements in order to keep operating costs low and because of reduced budgets. Savings are realized only in current year budget but may resurface in subsequent year budgets if service or support is warranted.

   b. **Publishing material on Website for self service (Project Ongoing)**

      Hundreds of forms, pamphlets, training and educational material, applications packets, rules and regulations have been published to the Department's website for the public to self serve. These publications have helped the public easily self serve for the information needed reducing the department labor, printing, mailing, postage, and handling. Additionally, the self service is instant therefore greater public satisfaction with less overall effort.

   c. **Single domain wide SSL certificate for Internet security (Project Completed)**

      LDAF had individual SSL certificates for websites/services that required secure connections. ITS realized that it is more cost effective to have a domain wide SSL for these websites and services. This has enabled ITS to provide access to more services in a secure manner without having to track, renew or pay for additional individual SSL certificates

   d. **Employee Resources on the Intranet (Project Ongoing)**

Many instructional manuals, handouts, forms, safety documentation, and pamphlets are published on the LDAF Intranet for employees. These publications are available to only the necessary groups within LDAF or to all employees. This greatly reduces the department's cost for labor, printing, binding, mailing and managing. The readily accessibility to the most updated version of the facts increases the efficiency of the person no matter their location. Immediate electronic research capability for the published information increases the credibility of our employees to the clients.

  e. **Telecommunication Audit: (Project Completed)**
    i. **66 % Reduction of Pagers**
       The agency evaluated the need for over 300 pagers. Over a 2 month period of time if justification for continued use was not approved then the pagers were disconnected. The project ended with over 200 pagers being disconnected. Annual justification shall be required on all active pagers for continued oversight.

    ii. **Reduction of Blackberries, added personal iPhone Exchange Active Sync (Project Completed)**
       Offices were asked to justify continued use of Blackberries or to voluntarily disconnect, personally subscribe and or migrate to a personal iPhone plan to get secure department email. This effort decreased the number of department funded blackberries from 30 to 12. This effort reduced the residual monthly service cost of Blackberry devices, and the number of Blackberry services by 60%. ITS also implemented Exchange ActiveSync at no cost which is available to employees with mobile devices that support it, such as Apple's iPhone. This allows employees to still have the benefit of secure mobile email, on their personal devices, without incurring additional licensing costs.

    iii. **Disconnected 70 Underutilized Telephone Lines Statewide (Project Completed)**
       All telephone line services to over 72 locations were studied for need and utilization. The project audit found that the department could disconnect 70 telephone lines and 2 circuits without affecting day to day operations.

  f. **Custom Application Training Documentation (Project in Progress)**
     ITS continue to develop documentation and training courses and courseware for packaged software and custom proprietary applications that address the needs for training to the application users. By using this knowledge transfer method, we are improving and continue to develop the skills of our workforce for increasing productivity, user efficiency and reducing helpdesk calls.

Section Five: Elimination of Duplicative and Unnecessary Services

List the activities of your department that fall outside of your constitutional and statutory mandates. Briefly describe the history of these programs, offices, or activities and how they became a part of your mission.

Identify outdated activities that should no longer be part of the mission of your agency. Act 491 notes that "many state agencies were created over 30 years ago and a review…is needed to determine whether the purpose served by the agency or activity, function, program, or service continues to be relevant."

Identify duplication or overlap with other state agencies, with the federal government, or with public or private stakeholder groups.

Section Six: Civil Service and Employee Benefits.
List and indentify any current initiatives or ideas related to employee benefits, hiring and promotion, and other employee regulations.

The department recently offered a retirement incentive to eligible employees at the maximum benefit allowed. Civil Service Rule 17.9 allows state agencies to offer as a retirement incentive, of up to fifty percent of the savings realized in a fiscal year, as the result of the employee's retirement. Employees must be eligible for regular retirement to qualify. The department had one-hundred eighty-four (184) employees eligible for retirement as of July 1, 2009. The retirement incentive was applied equally to all eligible employees and offered at the maximum fifty percent benefit.

In an effort to avoid a layoff and to reduce payroll and related costs of employment, the department implemented a Retirement Incentive Program for eligible employees who retired before August 1, 2009. Employees were offered a one-time, lump sum payment equal to 50% of their salary from date of retirement to the end of the Fiscal Year 2010 minus payment of 300 hours of annual leave payable upon separation. The offer was made to employees on July 13, 2009. As of August 1, 2009, forty-three (43) employees chose to accept the Retirement Incentive. The department will realize a salary savings of about $844,000 for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2010.

Section Seven: Studies and other Resources

Please list:
- Any studies (with a brief description) your agency has conducted that may be of interest to the Commission
- Any national studies or studies in other states that might be of relevance
- National organizations that might be a source of potential best practices for Louisiana. If a website exists for the organization, please provide it.

Section Eight: Agency Best Practices
List and indentify any current successful streamlining initiatives taking place (or has taken place) within your agency.

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

OFFICE OF SOIL AND WATER

SEPTEMBER 1, 2009

SUBMITTED BY:
MIKE STRAIN, DVM
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

DEPARTMENT: LDAF/Office of Soil & Water Conservation
STAFF CONTACT: Bradley E. Spicer, Asst. Commissioner
LAST UPDATE: 08/24/ 2009

Section One: Agency Overview

Identify your overarching reform goal(s) for the agency. As many of you experienced during the legislative session, it is paramount that you always strive to make our policy and programmatic goals clear and understandable to those outside your agency.

This could also include a brief general narrative description of what the agency does if it is not obvious from the goals.

The Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry's (LDAF) mission is to promote, protect and advance the State's agriculture and forestry, and soil and water resources. The mission of the LDAF Office of Soil & Water Conservation is to conserve and sustain these resources on Louisiana's croplands, grasslands, woodlands, wetlands, urban areas and waterways; this is accomplished by providing financial assistance, administrative guidance and coordination to the State's 44 Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and by partnering with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to deliver technical and financial assistance to Louisiana land owners.
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The goal of the LDAF Office of Soil & Water Conservation is to achieve a productive balance between Louisiana agricultural production and processes, and a healthy environment, wherein soil loss is reduced to within tolerable limits, water quality impairments due to agricultural processes are significantly reduced, and the quality of the State's soil and water resources, wildlife habitat, wetlands and other natural resources are enhanced.

The State Soil & Water Conservation Commission serves as the official state entity to cooperate with the USDA-NRCS, develops budget requests for state appropriations and disburses funds to the statewide soil & water conservation districts (SWCD), assists the districts in exercising their powers and carrying out their programs, confirms district supervisor appointments and oversees district supervisor elections, directs the legal process of district formation and discontinuance, maintains statewide information exchange between districts, and guides state policy in soil and water conservation.

Review and briefly outline the constitutional and statutory mandates for your agency. Determine what is required of your agency by law as distinct from the actual activities of your department.
Louisiana Soil Conservation Law RS 3:1201-1255

State Soil & Water Conservation Commission: Soil & Water Conservation District formation and management, cooperative soil survey, coastal re-vegetation, Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution reduction, USDA Farm Bill program implementation, Agricultural Solid Waste Management, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, conservation education and outreach .

List those mandates which impede attaining agency goal(s) and suggestions for changes in law(s).

Louisiana RS 3:1208 (11) states *"No district organized under the provisions of this Part shall have power to levy, assess, or collect any taxes or special assessments."*

This provision impedes the capacity of the State Soil & Water Conservation Commission, and the individual soil & water conservation districts to fully carry out their mandates of *"conservation of the soil and soil resources of this state, for the control and prevention of soil erosion, the prevention of floodwater and sediment damages, furthering the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water, preservation of natural resources, flood control, prevention of impairment of dams and reservoirs, assistance in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, preservation of wildlife, protection of public lands, and protection and promotion of the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of this state".*

A revision to include opportunities for conservation and land-use based excise, ad valorem, or other appropriate special assessments, in addition to legislative appropriations, would be beneficial to the State Soil & Water Conservation program.

Section Two: Efficiency and Benchmarking
Identify under-performing programs that should be overhauled or eliminated. The Commission will call on you to justify your programming based on performance and whether or not you are meeting the needs of Louisiana's citizens.

Performance goals of the OSWC are normally met, with occasional exceptions due to weather events, lack of adequate program funding, or adverse economic impacts to program participants.

Section Three: Outsourcing and privatization
List programs, functions, or activities that can be privatized or outsourced. This is a specific focus of the Commission. Consider this idea throughout your analysis, and offer a list of possible activities at the end of your report.

Privatization or outsourcing of any of the soil and water conservation programs of the state would undermine the well established working relationships between SWCDs, and other local, state and federal partners and private landowners, would create a cost prohibitive fee-for-service system that would reduce conservation efforts on private land, and would create liabilities for private landowners trying to maintain compliance with federal conservation programs. Privatization would have an overall negative impact to the conservation program, and would likely eliminate the $30-$35 million in federal conservation funds annually leveraged into rural economies through the state SWCD program.

Section Four: Information Technology Integration
List IT projects already underway designed to improve efficiency and effectives as well as potential projects. This could include adoption of single technology platforms to increase purchasing power, reduce maintenance costs and provide better service. If you are aware of how

the LaGov ERP project will improve your agencies operations or have suggestions to that end, provide them here.

Through an MOU with USDA, all conservation district employees are given the opportunity to fully utilize USDA office space, computers and other equipment, with training and maintenance provided by the USDA at no cost to the State. Also, conservation districts and LDAF/OSWC employees are recognized by the USDA as farm bill conservation program technical service providers, reducing costs to taxpayers by eliminating the need for outsourcing technical services, and are using GIS to manage and update individual conservation plans.

Section Five: Elimination of Duplicative and Unnecessary Services

List the activities of your department that fall outside of your constitutional and statutory mandates. Briefly describe the history of these programs, offices, or activities and how they became a part of your mission.

All activities of the LDAF/OSWC are within its mandates, and every effort is made to avoid duplication of services among agencies and within the local-state-federal conservation partnership. When beneficial, MOUs are developed with other state agencies to enhance effectiveness, eliminate duplication of services, and to leverage limited agency funds.

Identify outdated activities that should no longer be part of the mission of your agency. Act 491 notes that "many state agencies were created over 30 years ago and a review…is needed to determine whether the purpose served by the agency or activity, function, program, or service continues to be relevant."

Conservation of soil, water and related resources remains a significant public priority, and all program activities remain relevant. The OSWC continues to be innovative in streamlining the state conservation delivery system by using best management practices, new technologies, and by using a wide range of partnerships to implement the state's soil and water conservation programs.

Identify duplication or overlap with other state agencies, with the federal government, or with public or private stakeholder groups.

The OSWC continuously ensures no duplicity or overlap between the LDAF/OSWC and other agencies by establishing Cooperative Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding with other agencies and entities for the sake of efficiency, establishing an outline of duties for each in achieving common goals, and to ensure program participants are provided the best and most effective service.

Section Six: Civil Service and Employee Benefits.

List and indentify any current initiatives or ideas related to employee benefits, hiring and promotion, and other employee regulations.

District employees, while not state civil service employees, should be offered compatible pay rates and cost of living increases, funded through legislative appropriations, in order that district boards may reduce training costs due to high employee turnover resulting from non-competitive pay, and provide a continuity of services to their cooperators.

Section Seven: Studies and other Resources

Please list:

- Any studies (with a brief description) your agency has conducted that may be of interest to the Commission

The LDAF/OSWC in partnership with the USDA-NRCS annually conducts a statewide conservation partnership workload analysis, detailing conservation practices and conservation effects produced in relation to available State and Federal conservation funding. This analysis also illustrates shortfalls in FTE's and additional funds required to fully address local conservation needs. The statewide conservation needs are established through a natural resources inventory and assessment conducted by each SWCD field office, and conservation priorities are established by each SWCD annually conducting a "locally-led" conservation meeting to identify public concerns, followed by a local work group meeting through which the concerns are prioritized.

- Any national studies or studies in other states that might be of relevance
- National organizations that might be a source of potential best practices for Louisiana. If a website exists for the organization, please provide it.

The LA State Soil & Water Conservation Commission, the OSWC and local SWCDs rely heavily on Best Practices and other capacity building guidance developed and provided by the National Association of Conservation Districts www.nacdnet.org which includes information and updates regarding innovative conservation projects and programs in other states.

Section Eight: Agency Best Practices

List and indentify any current successful streamlining initiatives taking place (or has taken place) within your agency.

- **The OSWC currently assists the LDEQ with collection of field data required to support their grant funding with USEPA.**
- **The OSWC cooperates with LDEQ through several formal agreements to:**
  - **Dispose of animal carcasses in the event of natural disaster to avoid public health concern.**
  - **Exchange nonpoint source pollution information through GIS based land use pattern assessments.**
  - **Ensure the beneficial use of agricultural solid waste developed as a by-product of normal production and processing.**
- **The OSWC maintains a year-to-year MOU with the LDNR Coastal Restoration Division to re-vegetate 30-35 miles of degraded coastal shoreline and interior wetlands each year.**

- **The OSWC and the statewide conservation district program continue to operate through a long-standing MOU, and supplemental MOU with the USDA to ensure that conservation technical and financial assistance is delivered locally, as efficiently as possible, and according to local natural resource conservation priorities.**